608 ced himself under the protection of a landowning kin group, and injuries inflicted on him thereupon can lead to a blood feud as much as if he were a consanguinal relative.

All these attempts to establish artificial kinship are motivated by the attitude that kinship, even at geographical distance, is greater security than close relations with neighbors even of the same district. The proverb says:

[539] "Your (home) country, where is it?
(It is) Mary's water. (i.e. the womb).
You are my kinfolk!"

8. Attitudes based on Social Stratification

56 Social stratification among the Amhara, as has been shown, is based on land tenure and feudal relations between nobles and peasants; on the temporal as well as spiritual power of the Coptic Abyssinian church; on the ethnic division of skilled labor; on the conquest of border areas and the past subjugation of other ethnic and racial groups; to a lesser degree on age and sex.

565 184 Analysis of the human relations and attitudes arising out of this social stratification can be expressed in terms of class; sometimes approaching caste, because very little social mobility has been "open" to ethnic specialists in skilled labor and to

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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THE OLD AND NEW ELITES

121 The disjunction between traditional and modernizing sectors that characterizes the socialization of adolescents informs most aspects of contemporary Ethiopian society. A modern institution of Western inspiration has nearly everywhere been superimposed upon traditional forms, and as yet there has been relatively little interaction between the two.

[433] In the economy, subsistence production according to traditional techniques prevails throughout all Amhara areas. Production for national and international markets is funneled through separate channels; coffee lands and a few tobacco farms in the southern provinces, specialized commerce in a dozen or so provincial centers, and a small number of factories dependent mainly on non-Ethiopian management and, frequently, capital. In the legal [671] realm varied forms of customary law remain authoritative for much provincial litigation, while civil, criminal, and maritime codes based on French and Swiss ideals have been enacted as the law of the nation. The governmental structure is similarly bifurcated, between local authorities who govern [64] in the traditional manner, albeit with reduced powers, and a ministerial [795] system and parliament based on European models. In the case of religious [794] institutions there remains a wide gulf between the orientation of the Orthodox churches and that of such Western-inspired formations as the Theological College and the Orthodox Students Association.

121 This sociological dualism comes to a head in the system of social stratifi-
56 cation.
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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

cation. Since the mechanism of stratification ranks all the members of a society according to the value placed on their qualities and performances by that society, the stratification system of a society is its most inclusive framework of social order. Here too, however, conflicting value orientations are embodied in more or less distinct status hierarchies, and it is no longer possible to find status evaluations which are shared throughout the society. It is in the composition and relations of the elites that the value conflicts in Ethiopia today are most explicit, and in their mutual adjustments that the movement toward new forms of integration is most likely to be manifest.

The traditional infrastructure of Abyssinian society was itself relatively stratified. Highest in status were the landowning peasants, the older and wealthier of whom merged imperceptibly into the lower stratum of the nobility. Next in order were the peasants of various situations who did not own land: sons waiting to inherit land from their parents, tenants paying rents in kind to some landlord, and agricultural laborers attached as retainers on the estates of wealthy peasants, nobles, or churches. Below them were the statuses of Abyssinians who led a more mobile sort of existence, such as weavers, minstrels, common soldiers, and beggars.

The trading class was broadly divided into two ranks, that of the merchant (*naggādē*) whose caravans brought goods from afar, and that of the small-scale peddler (*shaqātch*). The wealthier Abyssinian merchant was accorded very high status, comparable at times to that of the nobility. If an Arab, Armenian, or Muslim Abyssinian, however, his status would be tainted by that disesteem felt for all outside the ethnic pale. The peddlers as a class were in a low status, comparable to that of the weavers and minstrels. Below these were metalsmiths, potters, and tanners, who were sometimes low caste Abyssinian artisans, sometimes Falasha or Gurage tribesmen. Lowest in status were the slaves, captured in wars or raiding expeditions from the Negroid tribes in the west (Shanqalla) and north (Baria and Kunama), and from the Kaffa and other Cushitic groups in the south. Freed for a generation now, such people still work as household servants and retainers, or as laborers in the towns.

Such were the classes which performed the drudgery. They produced sufficient surplus to sustain a fairly extensive, if not opulent, leisure class, which ministered to the more general political and cultural needs of the society. The feudal nobility and the clergy represented the paramount values of warfare and religion and shared responsibility for the maintenance of legal order. Together with the emperor, to whom they were normally subordinate, they commanded the resources and respect of the Abyssinian people and set standards for their behavior.